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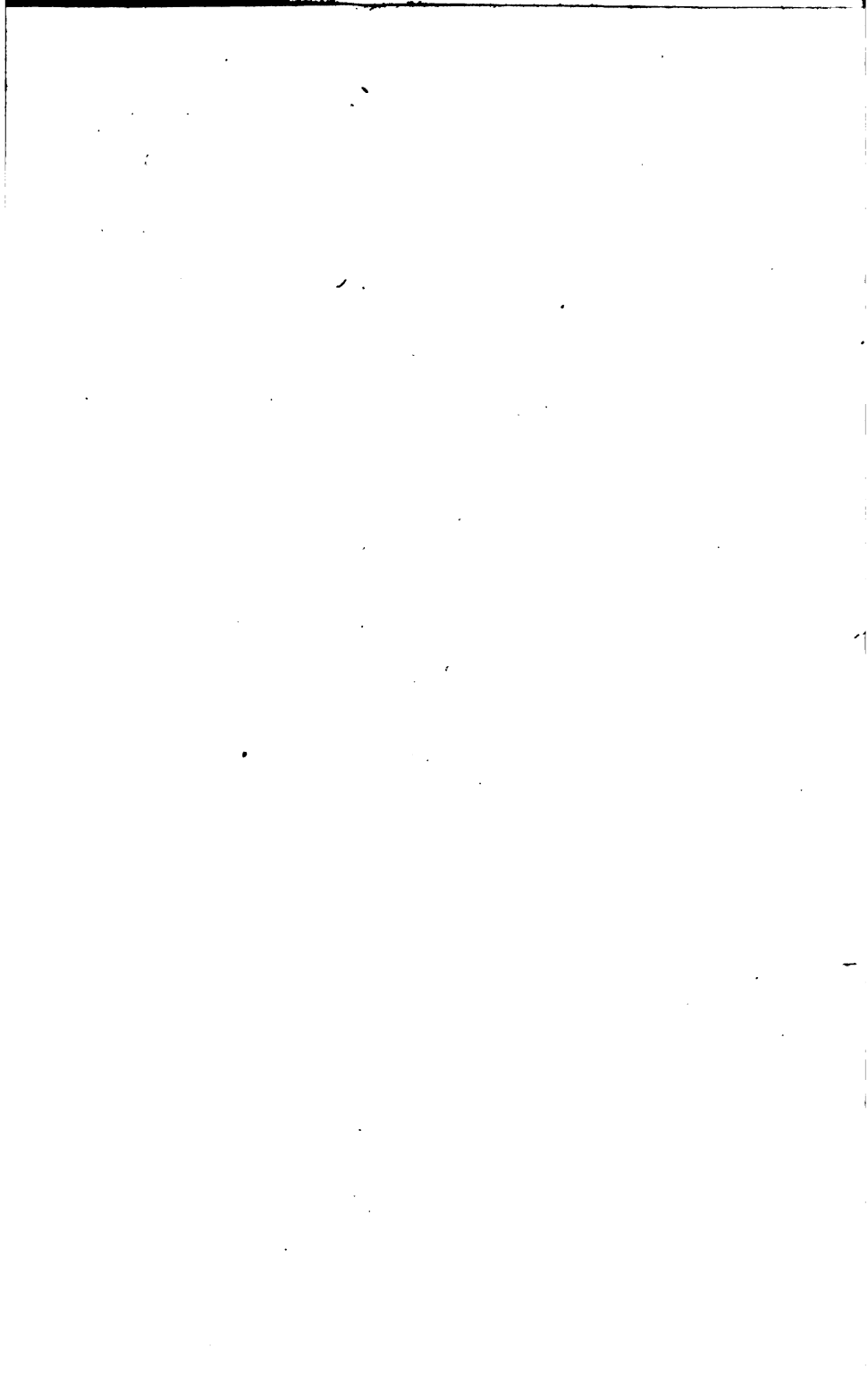
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INAUGURAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED ON THE EVENING OF THE EIGHTH OF
FEBRUARY, 1842, AT THE HOUSE OF THE

LIMERICK PHILOSOPHICAL AND
LITERARY SOCIETY.

BY

SIR AUBREY DE VERE, BART.

PRESIDENT, ETC.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

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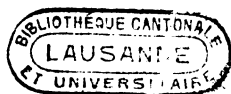
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and Literary Society of Limerick.



*My dear Göttinger
Verein hermitisch.*

TO THE
MEMBERS AND BENEFACTORS
OF THE
LIMERICK PHILOSOPHICAL AND LITERARY SOCIETY,
THIS ADDRESS IS DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

When I consider that meeting, for the first time, the members of the Limerick Philosophical and Literary Society, I have to address them from this chair, and within this hall now first thrown open for their use, I feel myself bound, however conscious of my own manifold deficiencies, to follow the course which you require, and custom has prescribed; and, having first acknowledged the honour you have conferred on me, proceed to discuss, with all needful brevity, the objects of our association, and the worthy ends to which our labours may contribute.

In England, not only are places of instruction more numerous, more convenient, and more munificently endowed, than in Ireland, whether schools for the young on public foundations, or those noble colleges, still increasing in number as in general favour, where knowledge is matured; but in every great town, associations for the en-

couragement of arts, the sciences, and literature, have been formed ; wherein all classes unite for one high purpose, the developement of the human faculties. To enlarge the understanding, purify the taste, elevate the desires, and discipline the habits of our nature ; to combine all parties and classes in common interests, through participated pleasures, free from unwholesome excitement and unseemly dispute, has been the aim, and is a consequence of such institutions.

These improvements, to which so much of the prosperity of England may be traced, have made slower progress in our beloved country ; through causes, which it would be out of place, and unseasonable, to discuss at present. But though our morning has been clouded, the day at length grows brighter. Not few have been the men eminent in intellect, and revered for their virtues, who have arisen among us ; poets, philosophers, divines, statesmen, soldiers, whose thoughts and actions have contributed to the glory of the entire nation, the good of all mankind. At length may we hope to take our stand beside the sister people, their moral and intellectual equal ; deserving to partake their power, and share, without diminishing, their glory.

But to reach this station, much exertion is necessary: and of our progress, the frequent establishment throughout the country of such associations as ours, supplies a gratifying proof.

Hitherto, however, this city, so advantageously placed for commerce or society, has, in all that concerns the improvement of human faculties and tastes, been lamentably deficient. While, with fewer advantages, Cork and Belfast have been honourably distinguished by their institutions and attainments, Limerick has confined her improvement to trade. Wealth has accumulated; our coffers, if not our minds, have been enriched; yet I must not be unjust: the scene before me is an evidence of that better spirit, which adds refinement to our gold, and makes men wise and virtuous. The want of an institution such as we have formed was felt; knowing our deficiencies, we sought amendment. At length, a few exertful men, clear-sighted and full of hope, prepared the plan on which we have acted, appealed to the public, and this building, not unworthy of its object, has been the result.

I shall not occupy your time by expatiating, at any length, upon the peculiar fitness of our

city to become the seat of a great literary and scientific establishment: its central position; its large and wealthy population; the gentry whose embellished domains are so frequent in its neighbourhood; the bounty of the soil; the salubrity of the air; the beauty of the scenery; and that noble river, which brings up to our landlocked quays the treasures of the sea. But you will pardon me when I remind you, as an historical fact, that while yet Great Britain was intellectually dark, our country was enlightened; and that this spot, once the capital of a kingdom, was scarcely less celebrated as a seat of learning. At no distant period a few straggling foundations might have been traced, marking the probable position of the "Regia" of Ptolemy; the residence of the elder kings; that regal line of O'Brien, yet extant in the houses of Thomond and Dromoland. The poor remains of Mungret are likewise sufficient to prove that provision was there made, for the maintenance of learned men, and the cultivation of letters. Nor should I omit to state, as a fact no longer subject to reasonable doubt, that when Charlemagne, bent on the restoration of learning, resolved to establish schools throughout his wide dominions, it was

from Ireland that the most eminent teachers were drawn.

Under these favourable circumstances, our advancement seems well assured; and we are entitled to hope that an institution capable of effecting much good, will not disappoint the expectations of its founders. Yet, while the list of our members and benefactors proves the great interest which our proceedings have excited, the absence of many whom we had hoped to meet, well-wishers whom we have reason to expect hereafter among us, is apparent.

There are some, perhaps, who doubt the usefulness, possibly the safety of such societies: who, having observed the abuses of a false philosophy, are jealous even of the name: who, knowing how education may be perverted, are fearful of all instruction. To these I would urge, (and I do not speak without the warrant of a strong necessity) that however individuals among us may differ upon questions of general and primary education; the objects of this institution are confined to the assistance of those, who, having passed the early stages of learning, seek advancement on those paths which lead to professional success, and are suitable to their

several tastes. We take up the mind where the schools have left it; and proffer aid to all who are honourably intent on self-improvement. It is our purpose to point out what it is good to know; and how to learn: to shew how beautiful in itself, and how disinterested a thing is literature: how beneficent a sound philosophy: how generous the rewards of science. It is for purposes altogether unselfish, that we invite men to associate; laying aside the rancour of politics, and the rivalry of party. We would call upon them, when the marvels of creation, and the infinity of providence; when the powers of the human mind, the resources of the intellect, and the appliances of skill; memory that admonishes, and reason that restrains, and imagination that excites; when topics like these flow eloquently from the teacher's lip, and are most pleasant to the ear, then emphatically would we call upon them, although it may be impracticable to combine specifick religious training with such institutions as the present, to be ever prompt with heart and voice, to recognize, and acknowledge, the bounty from which all these blessings spring.

To found hope on lessons thus inculcated will appear visionary to many, who are disposed, from

the not infrequent abuse of such institutions, to distrust them altogether.

That the tendency to evil lies at the root of all human plans, who shall deny? It is however our duty to sow the good seed as we may, leaving the harvest, as we must, yet without despair, to the Almighty Reaper.

I say not that, because men, led onward by a marked inherent capacity, have through self-exertion won high honours, and achieved great good, we are therefore to look for a sudden growth of intellectual power among us. Yet genius may exist even here, able, when properly developed, to influence mankind. Without encouragement, it is like the weed that withers unobserved; but which, with care and culture, might have been made to reappear the pride of our gardens. Nor let a too complacent reliance on our assistance delude. True genius has an expansive power, that will find enlargement in despite of adverse fortune, and the world's neglect. It needs but space and time; bare sustenance from man; and from God, grace and length of life. Powers such as belonged to Arkwright and Watt cannot be repressed by want of patronage: they need but a casual impulse; their human machi-

nery being perfect. If we touch the pendulum, the clock goes. Intellects akin to Newton, to Michelangelo, to Shakespeare, require little beyond the rudiments of instruction, to launch them on that course which they are destined to pursue, not as our followers, but guides. But for general purposes, we must take men on an average; endeavouring to awaken the spirit of enquiry, to remove what obstacles we may, from the onward path of improvement. If but one heart be stirred, one mind kindled, sufficient in that good shall be our reward.

Let it not be forgotten that ours is no novel experiment. In all other countries—in England, throughout Europe, in America, and the Indies, associations for literary and scientific advancement have long existed; conferring acknowledged benefits on various races of men; and, in some regions, laying the foundations of a civility, which shall, in future time, facilitate the union of unbelieving nations with the Church of God.

But there are some who, granting the utility of an association like ours, contend that here it was no longer needful; because one, a society somewhat analogous, has for many years flourished in our city. Excellent, however, as the objects of

that institution have been, it is deficient in much that *our* growing wants require. Its *character* has, in fact, been too private; and is not sufficiently adapted to convey information to that extent which is now so generally demanded, and which secures the general support. This presumed defect it has been our purpose to supply; not, certainly, in a spirit of rivalry, but, if it be permitted, of friendly co-operation.

A place of deposit for our standard literature, unconnected with periodicals and newspapers, was desirable; in which works of permanent value should be preserved, uninjured by circulation beyond the walls of the library. It would be vain to expect gifts or bequests of valuable books, unless the donors can feel certain of their safe preservation. In such a collection, the character of the works purchased should be strictly defined, and of no transitory interest. Being chosen not for amusement but instruction, nothing trivial should be admitted; and all books bordering on impiety or bad morals must be rigorously excluded.

A lecture hall, sufficiently spacious, and adapted to public exhibitions, was a further object: space for a museum, should valuable specimens of art, or natural history, and other objects of

general interest, be contributed, as we have reason to expect, was to be secured. Thus far our purposes have been already fulfilled; and we feel ourselves justified, once more, in proposing to our brother institution an union of funds, and a co-operation in our effort to be useful.

We ask not any abandonment of the peculiar rules by which it has been governed: these are capable, we think, of combination with our arrangements. We can assign to our friends a commodious room, free from the intrusion of any but the individual subscribers. In return, we claim access to their books, and union of their scientific collection with our own. Our members do not require to read the newspapers and magazines which they purchase; nevertheless we freely throw open to them the lecture room and library erected by us. Should the two societies unite, their funds, no longer wasted on separate establishments, will supply resources ample for all purposes that the most sanguine have contemplated. A library, a museum, a regulated system of literary and scientific lectures, musical performances, dramatic readings,—whatever, in short, may promote the diffusion and enjoyment of

knowledge and the arts, combined with the amenities of social intercourse, will be secured.

I have said that it must be our endeavour to form a perfect library; selecting those books only which instruct, purify, and refine. Above all, we should be strong in the early literature of our country. To that belongs a freshness and a raciness, a colour, (if I may venture the expression) and an odour, which we seek for vainly in the works of later writers. It is like the majestic wildernesses of newly explored lands, sparkling in the dew of morning, and untrodden by the profaning footsteps of the crowd. Our language, drawn from many sources, derives from the Saxon its strength and distinctive expression. The nearer we approach that undefiled well, the purer shall be our draught.

Without resting, as his inimitable graces would warrant, upon Chaucer, and succeeding writers who illustrated the era of the Plantagenets, (whose works cannot, however, be fitly appreciated without previous study) where shall we find language so equal to his argument as in Bacon? where a richer treasury of eloquence and fancy than among the poets of the Tudor age? where reasoners more astute, theologians in all respects more

divine? Has the sonorous latinity of Samuel Johnson, or the polished antithesis of Gibbon, improved upon the style bequeathed to us by Raleigh and the Chroniclers; by Hooker, Jeremy Taylor, and Barrow? Who has not felt that in dignity of expression, significancy, and force, combined with a certain artless harmony in the flow of words, the translators of the sacred volume remain unapproached and unapproachable?

And here let me observe, that in thus naming a few of our great Anglican theologians, I intend no allusion to doctrinal differences, or the merits of rival tenets. The more we appreciate the grave importance of those differences, the more careful should we be to discuss them only on fit occasions. In truth, theology and polemics differ essentially: the divine science is of common interest to all Christian men; but its controversial exercise should, in reverence, be restricted to proper seasons and the suitable place. The works of our best divines are not confined to any persuasion; but in their eloquence, and learning, and piety, the whole church of God rejoices: for all that is best of philosophy, in ethics, and in oratory, pertains of necessity to theology; giving pre-

cision to the preacher's thought, and invigorating his tongue.

Nor do we limit our reverence to the writers I have named, and their noble brotherhood of the English church. We extend our Christian study to the pious labours of Bossuet, and Fenelon, Massillon, Bourdaloue, and Pascal. Neither should the materials of profound theological knowledge,—the centre of all knowledge,—be absent from a good library; how rigorously soever, and wisely, we prohibit, beneath this roof, all personal debate. The whole works of the early fathers, in the original, and with the best translations, ought to be at hand for reference, and mature study; while the Annals of Baronius, and Fleury's great Ecclesiastical History, should stand on our shelves beside the analagous labours of Dugdale, Bingham, and Strype.

The reference, however, which I have thus made to certain great French writers, will justify a few additional remarks upon a particular school of their literature; which but to name is to condemn. The works, numerous as they are infamous, of the Encyclopedists, must be regarded only as beacons, warning us to beware: they are

surrounded by unspeakable perils, from which there is no escape but in avoidance.

In the departments of history and statistics, voyages of discovery, travels, which familiarize us with the scenery and manners of distant lands, and the various sciences; whatever, in short, contributes to the great storehouse of facts, our library should be rich. It should be a treasury of divine instruction, and of philosophical discovery. Nor would I exclude works of fiction; for well I know that the highest faculty we possess is imagination; the very parent of thought, and originator of all human invention: but I would provide such works only as have been assayed and made current by time. The great poets, from Chaucer to Walter Scott, including, of course, the dramatic writers of the Elizabethan era, must, in more than one edition, be within the reach of all our members. Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett; writers, whose portraiture of character and manners is so graphical, consistent, and instructive; and, in Southey's version, the old romances of Amadis, Palmerin, and the Cid,—

“That like a trumpet make young pulses dance”—

should not be wanting. Of living poets, novelists, and political writers, I am disposed to advise

that no purchases shall be made; with one noble exception; for the works of Wordsworth must go down to posterity, the fairest offspring of the genius of our time. Many of those works we shall probably acquire by donation: but we ought never to run the risk of wasting our funds by the purchase of books whose value is questionable, and fame perhaps ephemeral. With respect to history, biography, the various branches of science, topography, ethicks, and theology, the study of language, and works compiled for general reference, the case is different. Facts, like grains of gold from sand, may be gleaned with labour from diffuse books; and both are worth sifting if the metal be there.

In the selection of books, provision must be made to suit the tastes, and meet the reasonable demand of the members at large; so as to facilitate the studies of all: observing that works of general utility should not be neglected, by a too exclusive choice of treatises in separate departments of literature or science. Errors of this kind have not been infrequent elsewhere; occasioning dispute, a declining income, and public neglect. Such evils may easily be avoided, by the choice of a judicious committee, annually

erected; which shall be required to report in writing; specifying, and if necessary justifying, the selection of books they have made: thus successive committees would act in rivalry to their predecessors; taking a pride in the accessions to the library which each had been able to effect.

A full collection of dictionaries and grammars of the more important languages would be useful, in affording facilities for self instruction. In few countries are philological enquiries more interesting than in ours, where the native language is at length recognized, as the purest remnant of one of the oldest, and most diffused, spoken by the remoter races of the world. Able works, therefore, throwing light on such subjects, it will be proper to procure. I need scarcely urge the necessity of possessing the Holy Scriptures in various tongues; good annotated editions of the classicks; and the greater authors of the principal European nations; and I would further desire a few specimens of the early typographers; contrasting the bold and clear elegance of the presses of Aldus and of the Stephens, with the modern splendour of Baskerville and Bodoni.

Permit me now to submit a few observations

on the subject of our projected museum ; a name which, considering the extent of our present funds, may to many appear somewhat ambitious. For the commencement of a collection, we must obviously depend upon private liberality altogether : and that we may reasonably entertain such hopes, is proved by the tender, which I have already had the pleasure of transmitting from Captain Lysaght, of Indian birds and minerals. This gift is the more satisfactory, as it marks the degree of interest with which our early proceedings have been observed in so distant a country. Contributions of a like nature have come in, and may frequently be expected from various quarters. We have, for example, lately received valuable presents from Mr. Locke, of geological specimens; from Mr. Newenham, of minerals; from Mr. Byefield, models of crystals; and from Mr. Browne, one of those rare stones, inscribed with Ogham characters, which for some years had been in his possession at Castle Matrix.

Travellers are frequently collectors : those who feel an interest in our progress, and love knowledge, will readily place their duplicates, at least, in our hands. They will remember the friends they have left at home; and not withhold some gener-

ous exertion to acquire objects worthy of interest, or suitable for instruction in their own country. We know, from the experience of similar institutions, how rapidly gifts and bequests flow in, when once a place of safe deposit is prepared. These may not in each separate instance be of much value; but the aggregate soon becomes important.

A sufficient collection of mineral and geological specimens, exhibiting the structure of our own, and the adjoining counties, may be obtained with ease. How closely these enquiries concern the landlords and labouring classes of the district, I need not point out. We ought to know the materials of the soil, before the application of manures. To this end, a systematic arrangement of earths and their subsoils, of rocks, metals, and fossil remains, is necessary; whereby a full comprehension of the resources of the country, and the means of calling them into action, may be open to all. Our county engineers, the officers employed in the national survey, the government by the donation of duplicates, our parochial clergy, all, in short, who regard science and the wellbeing of the country, will lend their aid to the attainment of this object.

Ancient weapons, coins, and medals, miscellaneous relics, charter deeds, genealogies, journals and letters, all documents illustrating the past state and manners of society and family history, local traditions, statistical and political records, all these should be carefully collected and classed. Hereafter, perhaps, a selection from such papers may be prepared for occasional publication: nor is it easy to assign limits to the interest which a work of this sort would excite. The Earl of Northumberland's Household Book has been given to the world, as a curious and valuable illustration of past times; and the local songs of the northern peasantry of England, form a very interesting portion among the antiquarian collections of Ritson.

Communications respecting the topography of the neighbouring counties, so rich in the remains of eras so remote, and races of men so dissimilar, must be invited. Fine examples are to be found here of the round towers almost peculiar to our country; unknown, perhaps, elsewhere, except in Chaldea and Central India: of Druidical circles and cromleachs; remarkable examples of which may be traced near Lough Ghur: of the mysterious Ogham inscriptions—those primitive cha-

racters which are deemed to be coeval with the arrow-headed letters on the Babylonian bricks, and the friezes of Persepolis: of raths and forts ascribed to the Danes, though probably the relics of a far earlier people; those Dānāāns, whose name recalls the Dorian ancestry claimed by the Milesian conquerors: and whose rude structures, of a similar form, are referred to by Müller as still extant in Greece; roofless temples, wherein the sacrifices to Belus or Apollo, the God of fire and light, were offered from grassy altars, by the dwellers of the woods. Castles, built at different periods of our eventful history, are numerous on our hills; and monastic ruins, still beautiful in decay, and affording proof of the architectural genius of their times, and the liberality of their founders, are frequent in our valleys. These are, in general, crowded with monumental inscriptions; and many a tale connected with past history may yet be gleaned in their vicinity. From morasses, even from old quarries, curious relics are frequently dug out; fragments of dress, weapons, and the ornaments of chieftains, whose very names are forgotten: and those large bones of extinct animals, apparently belonging to no European species, but

resembling the elk, still a free ranger of the American forest.

The ecclesiastical remains to which I have alluded demand some further remark. Though not large, as compared with the similar, yet far more magnificent structures in England, whose endowments were princely—the benefactions of a wealthy and pious nobility, who, in the crusades, or for the church, spared not their blood or worldly treasure, so that the service of God might fitly be performed—though unquestionably inferior to those, yet is their architectural merit very striking, and in some respects original. The cloisters, for instance, display on a reduced scale a rare elegance in their composition, and many peculiarities of detail; as in the abbeys of Askeyton and Muckross. The great east windows, of graceful proportions, but without ornament at the intersections of the shafts, differ strikingly from the florid examples of England, and are very beautiful in their chaste, but not bald, simplicity. The towers, so lofty and delicately proportioned, are singularly symmetrical. The high stone-roofed chapels, exquisite examples of which remain, almost uninjured by time, at Killaloe; and at Cashel, built by Cormac, saint and king; and

those little chapels, or rather cells, of rude but massive workmanship, which carry us back to the remote ages of faith, when the land was thinly peopled and without wealth; are worthy of more attention than they have received. Of the latter there is a good specimen, (overhanging the picturesque little lake of Dromore in this county) the interior of which measures only twelve feet by eight. It is to be observed, too, how thickly these monasteries are placed, sometimes in very striking groups; and how frequently in conjunction with the castles of powerful chieftains, Kildare or Desmond, to whom, doubtless, the holy brotherhoods looked up for protection. Thus have they been associated at Kilmallock and Adare, at Newcastle, Askeyton, and Rathkeale; while the no less beautiful edifices at Manister, Hospital, and Quin, secure in piety and charitable deeds, stood alone, yet without danger, in their quiet valleys. The stone crosses, (a fine specimen of which has been engraved in Ledwich's antiquities, that of Clonmacnoise,) are very remarkable works; elaborate, but in a fashion that reminds us more of eastern than of European art. Nor is our military architecture to be undervalued. There are few structures of nobler proportion, or more for-

midable aspect, than the castle gateway of our own city ; so lately disinterred, as it were, by our eminent architect Pain, from the mass of squalid rubbish which obscured it.

I shall now proceed to call your attention to the subject of the arts; a topick of no less importance than those hitherto touched upon. But I fear that I may have already exhausted your patience ; I must, therefore, endeavour to be brief.

I am not sanguine enough to expect that pictures or sculptures, of a high class of art, can soon be acquired, by purchase or donation, for our museum : yet much, to judge by the experience of other institutions, may by degrees be obtained calculated to satisfy good taste and to teach, young artists what to imitate and how to excel. Good copies, and sometimes respectable originals, may not be unattainable. By subscribing to the numerous art-unions, pictures by living painters of merit may come into our possession. Portraits of distinguished persons will be presented ; more remarkable, perhaps, as objects of interest, than for their artistick merit. Such we ought gladly, and gratefully, to receive ; for independently of those which possess a distinct historical value, a collection of ancestral portraiture

is interesting. Such portraits, if presented to us, would form an instructive memorial of worthy men, who, in our county and city, have discharged their several duties with honour, and are still cherished for the memory of their social virtues. Their lineaments we should love to contemplate, as the types of beloved faces still around us ; and dwell on them with regard, as the companions of our forefathers.

Many there have been, whose characters and actions influenced the times in which they lived. They belong to the history of their country ; and as such, I should not have thought it necessary to proceed beyond the simple enumeration of their names. But they belonged, likewise, to our own familiar circles ; they hold their places in the hearts of this assembly : and it well beseems the living to feel a grateful interest in all that concerned the illustrious dead ; and to be prompt in extolling their actions and high qualities. Very eminent men, I repeat, have risen from among us.

Such was Lord Pery ; the justly celebrated speaker of the Irish house of commons ; a man of a large and manly intellect ; far-seeing, inflexible, just ; of pure morals, sincere piety, and con-

sistent in the discharge of duty; knowing how to blend patriotism with loyalty: who lived and died without a foe.

Such was Lord Chancellor Clare; astute, fearless, and decisive; formidable in debate; a lawyer, eloquent and subtle; a trusty minister; an ardent friend; on the bench not to be outwitted.

Such was Lord Guillamore; a judge, who united to deep professional learning a shrewd penetration, and searching wit; which, without taking from his impartiality, stimulated his judicial acumen, and left him with few equals in society.

And such was Lord Hutchinson; (who, though inhabiting a neighbouring county, lived within the circle which we may hope to influence) the hardy soldier, knowing how to cherish literature amid the rough usages of the camp; a successful general, adhering in retirement to principles unpalatable to his prince, and opposed to the dominant party of his time.

And such, too, that other great officer whose laurels were gathered in the east, Sir Eyre Coote, the conqueror of Hyder.

Nor may I omit, though not born in this

county, that pious and learned prelate, Bishop Jebb; whose days of health, and rare intellectual endowments, were dedicated to our service: whose theological writings have long since taken their just place beside the standard literature of the country: who, careful in enquiry, and uncompromising in principle, was never intolerant; affording to mankind an eminent example (to quote the title of one of his own excellent publications) of "piety without asceticism."

Neither can I forget Gerald Griffin; whose writings illustrate so well ~~the~~ national character and scenery of our country: too soon withdrawn from those literary labours, which have won a reputation beyond the limits of his own land, and destined to endure: a man of a most winning modesty, shrinking from praise: dreading his own powers, lest they should not sufficiently conduce to his virtuous designs: and finally turning with conscientious firmness, from the open path of fame, to that better retirement wherein he might dedicate his whole heart to God.

Others there have been, whom time permits me but briefly to name: Chief Baron Wolfe; Sir William M'Mahon, late Master of the Rolls; Judge Day; Charles Johnston, the author of

Chrysal: the Ouseleys, travellers and ambassadors in the East: O'Halloran, the historian: Keogh, a learned lexicographer and philologist: Daniel Webb, whose essays on art and general literature are graceful and instructive. Nor are men wanting—soldiers and statesmen—who, in the field, the cabinet, or the senate, still do good service. But these I name not; for eulogy of the living seems too nearly allied to flattery: and human fame is uncertain, 'till it has received the seal of death.

But, to return to the subject of the arts; there is one sort of collection which it may be within our power, at a moderate cost, to form: I allude to engravings. These, simply framed in oak, might be arranged upon our walls, either by schools or in the order of time; at once interesting to the connoisseur, and instructive to the young artist. In engravings we see combined the most valuable qualities of art,—grace of outline, purity of design, and energy of expression, the science of composition, the magick of chiaro-scuro; whatever, in short, is most characteristick of the artist and the school, with the exception of colour: that quality in a picture which depends

not on the intellectual faculties, and is the least estimable and most evanescent.

In the style of the engraver, also, we find an infinite variety. The ideal graces of Raffaele ; the severe majesty of Michel Angelo ; the purity of Coreggio ; the learning of the Carracci ; the earnest expressiveness, ascetical elevation, and saintly simplicity of the earlier masters ; the exuberant splendour of Rubens, the shadowy vigour of Rembrandt, the individuality of Vandyke, are not more contrasted, than are a series of plates from Edelinck and Marc Antonio, to Raphael Morghen and our own Strange. Specimens of all styles, from the spirited etching to the soft mezzotinto, we should endeavour to collect : and if to these can be added a few drawings from the hands of the old masters, exhibiting in their "pentimenti" the progress of thought, and the gradual developement of design, the benefit to the student will be great.

In addition to engravings, a selection of full sized casts from the antique, and the great Italian masters of the middle ages, would be desirable ; as, for instance, the "Moses" of Michel Angelo ; the "Jason" of Raffaele ; the "Mercury" of John

of Bologna; the "Perseus" of Benevenuto Cellini, and other works of the same sculptors, and of Donatello, Lorenzo Ghiberti, Torregiano, and Gougeon; to which should be added some of the best from the modern, but not inferior, chisels of Flaxman, Canova, Thorwaldsen, Schadow, and Dannecker. The government will contribute, I venture to hope, those casts which are now in preparation from the Athenian and other marbles in the British Museum. Nor, though insignificant in size, should the impressions from gems, usually called sulphurs, be neglected. They are precious, not alone for their intrinsic beauty of design, but as preserving the only representations remaining of the lost sculpture of antiquity; from which the best artists of later times have drawn their inspiration, and Raffaele himself has not disdained to copy.

For the architectural student, works like Stuart's *Antiquities of Athens*, and Britton's *English Cathedrals*, should be provided. Fragments of mouldings, decorative carvings, capitals, and bases, and complete models in cork or wood of celebrated buildings, would be particularly desirable. I name these, as I have specified certain casts, and expensive engravings, not in the vain expectation of our making such acqui-

sitions by purchase, but suggestively to the many, who, I doubt not, will yet prove their will, as they possess the means, of becoming benefactors to our society.

I may add, that, for art in general, few works are more instructive than that comprehensive, yet cheap collection in outline, by Landon of Paris. They include the entire works of Raffaele, Michel Angelo, Domenichino, Albano, Daniel de Volterra, Bandinelli, Guido, the Carracci, Coreggio, Nicolo Poussin, and I believe a few others. Whoever studies the principle of design in this publication, will store up in memory whatever has been best effected by the greatest painters since the revival of art.

By such means, if there be latent genius among us, it will be called into action; and the motives for exertion, not without reasonable hope of reward, supplied. A new school of art may, possibly, grow up; with all its salutary and intellectual influences; embellishing and instructing our homes; and destined in other lands to receive honours, in which we, who fostered its developement, shall participate. Let it not be forgotten that the feeling for art, however moderate, in Cork, sufficed to awaken the genius

of Barry ; and, in later times, of Maclise and Hogan ; men worthy of high praise : one of them, at least, enjoying the patronage so well deserved by both.*

I have now fulfilled the more obvious part of my task ; happy if you, to whom many of my remarks must appear trite, have not felt your time unprofitably wasted, and your attention overstrained. Yet something I would venture to add, which, however presumptuous in me to offer, may not prove wholly unworthy of consideration.

The very name we bear is to some a ground of offence ; for, in the latter time, literary and philosophical pursuits have too often led to evil consequences. It is not always by the aid of good letters and virtuous teaching, that the intellect is cultivated ; nor does instruction always guide to a sound philosophy. The age which has passed was styled, by those vain men

* I think it just to call public attention to the works of an artist of real merit, Mr. J. H. Mulcahy, a native of this county, now residing in Lime-
rick ; whose landscapes show powers of no ordinary degree. In fact, this painter requires practice only, with opportunities of study, to take his place among the distinguished artists of his country. Many of the views which he has painted of local scenery, for the author of this address, and other gentlemen, are very charming, and his original compositions are skilful and full of fancy ; giving proof of a correct taste, and a just eye for colouring, and the disposition of light and shade.

who belonged to it, enlightened: yet were its deeds of darkness and its fortunes disastrous. In France, in Germany, nay in our own boasted land, the progress of knowledge seemed for a time but to herald infidelity, and instigate treason. Men, grown self-sufficient in their acquirements, claimed for reason the attributes of God: They dared to promulgate the cold speculations, or vague dreams of a sceptical philosophy, in rivalry to the Inspired Word: as if creeds might be invented, or modified, or discarded, at the will, or to suit the varying purposes of man: as if man were bound by no stronger obligation, and needed no surer guidance, than his own judgment; no atonement more perfect than the penalties of human law. To suppose that phantasms like these could permanently disturb the world, and debase the human character, were to distrust Providence: nevertheless, the progress of infidelity has left all but indelible footprints in foreign lands; and at home, was not arrested without efforts which wearied, though they could not exhaust, the champions of the right; leaving them vigilant, nay suspicious observers of each movement that may indicate a revival of that evil spirit, subdued but not extinct.

But at length, let us hope that better times have arrived. Men now perceive that without faith in Revelation, and knowledge of God's will, all science is vain, all virtue empty, all power fleeting: and when they speak of instruction, they mean that which is founded on Religion; leading through a life of righteousness to a death in faith.

These reflexions seem pertinent at a time when we are too often compelled to combat a reasoning, which is not wisdom; inculcating virtue, doubtless, but less as a sacred duty, than with a prudential foresight; when maxims of utility are substituted for the ordinances of Christianity; when youth is solicited to moral habits, inasmuch as they are safe and profitable, instead of being commanded to obey the law of God, because its sanctions are divine, and its rewards in the everlasting hereafter. It is in such a spirit, that shrewd men prate of knowledge as a power; of the "march of intellect," as if, indeed, the legions of Cæsar, or rather the bands of Attila, trod close behind.

Not thus should we presume to address our friends; nor, on such grounds, recommend our institution to the public patronage. Let us love learning for its own sake, and with no selfish

aim; because it lays open the ways of Divine Wisdom to all who seek with a disciplined spirit, and a chastened heart. Let us cultivate science, from the desire of knowledge, in quest of truth, and for the good which it evolves from the gifts of the Almighty; literature, for its temperate enjoyments, and intrinsic worth; the arts for their refining influences, and for that sensibility to the beautiful, the tranquil, and the perfect, which they implant, prompting us to admire without envy, amass without avarice, and love without one selfish desire.

To grasp knowledge as the means of elevating ourselves above our fellow-men, to recommend literature as the stimulant of liberal ideas, is, at best, but illusory. Knowledge, rightly understood, is the dispeller of inordinate self-esteem, acquainting us with our imperfections, and guiding to amendment. So, likewise, literature should awaken a purer taste within us; elevating our desires, supplying models for imitation, examples in study, motives for honest emulation, rewards for generous exertion. In truth, the greater our scientific acquirements, the more conscious ought we to be of our own deficiencies: and as we comprehend our innate feebleness, we should

become modest. While the capacity and resources of our nature are unfolded to our view, we perceive how impossible it is to estimate, by these natural faculties, the extent of that power which has endowed and still supports us. Yet, as enquiry but demonstrates the vastness of the mysteries which surround us, and lifts no veil from the secret sanctuary of the Creator, the necessity of a revelation and the duty of faith strengthen in our convictions. Irradiated by such faith, all that we behold, so fraught with wonder, delighting by the most perfect adaptation, giving evidence of a motive so full of love to man, and a foresight so comprehensive, but telling of power without limitation, a procedure unimaginable, a plan beyond the grasp of human thought; all these are fitting objects for devout contemplation and study, with thanksgiving. Thus taught, men grow better for the purposes of earth, as they enlarge their acquaintance with things divine. They become liege subjects, true patriots, honest neighbours, pure in their family relations: not alone through deference to laws, nor for the interests of society, nor by the demonstrations of science and subtleties of reason; but as submitting to the commandments of

the Most High ; knowing who and what He is ; confiding in His providence ; properly estimating the nature of their duty to Him.

We must beware lest we make of natural theology an idol. Man recognizes instinctively the glory of God in his works : the most critical examination of them, in detail, can do no more : it may do less. The habit of investigating nature minutely, in order to trace out the design of the Great Artificer, through every process, may turn our thoughts not so much to the wisdom of God, as to a certain divine ingenuity : not unattended by a complacent sense of our own cleverness in detecting it.

The evidences of a Divinity are obvious to all, whether in the civilized or savage state : but the question which concerns the Christian is of no abstract deity, but of that true God, respecting whom an answer has been vouchsafed, a revelation recorded. Obvious proofs of a Supreme Intelligence rush upon mankind, even the meanest, from every quarter ; beheld with admiration, and, too often, with little reverence for the Almighty Workman. Natural religion is not properly religion ; far less a substitute for religion : its speculations are vain-glorious, its devo-

tion selfish; human thought and human feelings mounting no higher than their source. We rejoice in the light, and refresh ourselves in the shade, considering not the centre from which emanates the one, or the substance which projects the other. In the poverty of his heart, the unenlightened man measures all things by the rule of his own interest; he loves God, not for His holiness, but as the giver of all good things: he is thankful for the great sun, His handy work, because thereby all nature is quickened; he is thankful for this bountiful earth, inasmuch as she is the parent of the luxuries he enjoys; for the seas, as the pathway of commerce; for the air and clouds, as the treasury of fertilizing rain.

But to the reflective Christian, who has resigned his heart to the lessons of Holy Scripture, authentically delivered by wise and pious teachers, and handed down from the age of miracles, which testified, to our days of trouble, which find no comfort but in their truth, how differently do all things shew! He traces all from God—he looks through all for heaven: he loves all, because they are donatives of love. He fixes not his desires on matters hard to be achieved, and easily lost when won: in fair weather, he forgets not the

storm ; and in the midst of enjoyment, stands prepared for adversity. He seeks not after vain changes, but strives to be content. While he feels that to commune constantly with God is his noblest privilege, he forgets not the charities of human life, which bind him to his neighbour. He rejoices in worthy actions ; he seeks the conversation of good men ; cherishes friendship ; is watchful to bring virtue to light ; rewards merit ; contemplates nature with admiration, finding cause for gratitude in all things. The faculties confided to him he fosters with a conscientious fidelity, knowing that he is an accountable being. Honouring God in his spirit, he holds his treasure for God's service, and his body for God's glory. Knowing that his endowments, whether spiritual or temporal, are bounties not to be wasted in idleness, or perverted to evil, he feels bound to improve, nay, more, to impart, them for the benefit of his fellow-men. He gathers the good seed, not to be stored aside, but laid out upon reproductive soil ; nor confines his culture to fertile fields, but has a care for the improvement of the barren land. Whatever blessings he enjoys, he beholds God in them—he praises God for

them—he serves God with them—he does good to mankind by them !

Such a man will find encreasing delight in books ; the intercourse of social life ; the conversation of the learned ; the lessons of science ; the musing of lonely walks. His home will be dear ; hospitality and generous enjoyments not displeasing ; charity will be on his lips, and in his hand ; he will have pity ; be patient of wrong ; forgetful of vengeance. True servant of God, he will ever be master of himself, and a fit helper of his kind. His course through life will be as the hours that fulfil the year, moving towards the appointed end with a just gradation ; 'till the faculties of his nature, in due season, be developed ; the purpose of creation accomplished. So he will prefer conscience before riches, virtue above honours, piety beyond pleasure, duty in despite of pain ; pursuing knowledge that he may comprehend his ignorance ; desiring power but to do good.

Allow me, in conclusion, to entreat the pardon of those, who, differing from my opinions, may possibly resent their intrusion here ; but called upon publicly, as I have been, to address you on subjects of no slight importance, I felt it a duty

to perform my task with sincerity and without fear; giving to philosophy and to literature the praise they deserve; and with equal plainness, pointing out their insufficiency for the permanent welfare of the individual and of society.

A few words more, and I have done. If it should not be deemed intrusive, to offer a few lines of poetry at the conclusion of so tedious an address, I would venture to add a few verses, written when I had just completed my unaccustomed labour in prose; naturally springing out of the subject which then occupied so my thoughts; and being, in fact, the key-note of the theme. It is entitled,

A SONNET

ON THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE.

So frail is the condition of our birth,
Our human course with such disaster fraught,
That solaces are needful of high Thought.
Our Hearts are hungered, aching through the dearth
Of knowledge: harvests gleaned from sensual earth
Feed not the Soul: ethereal fields are sought—
Regions, whereto the soaring spirits are caught,
Like eaglets from their eyrie darting forth
Into the sun-rise. To attain—to know—
Is man's bold prayer. Alas! the gates of sense
Unbarred, through them shall lore immortal flow?
Can intellect reveal, man's art declare,
Mysteries of grace—redemption—providence?—
Wisdom and faith are one! Be faith our prayer!

N O T E .

These lines are, in some sort, moulded on the recollection of a prayer by Bacon; with whose earnest and pregnant language, in another most apposite supplication I subjoin.

“Thou, O Father, who gavest the visible light as the first-born of thy creatures, and didst pour into man the intellectual light as the top and consummation of thy workmanship, be pleased to protect and govern this work, which, coming from thy goodness, returneth to thy glory. Thou, after thou hadst reviewed the works which thy hands had made, beheldest that every thing was very good, that thou didst rest with complacency in them. But man, reflecting on the works which he had made, saw that all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and could by no means acquiesce in them. Wherefore, if we labour in thy works with the sweat of our brows, thou wilt make us partakers of thy vision and thy sabbath. We humbly beg that this mind may be steadfastly in us; and that thou, by our hands, and also by the hands of others, on whom thou shalt bestow the same spirit, will please to convey a largess of new alms to thy family of mankind. These things we commend to thy everlasting love, by our Jesus, thy Christ, God with us. Amen.”

In addition to the presents described in a former page, several have been sent in, which I was not then aware of. Mr. T. H. Kelly has given the Society a valuable collection of Australian plants, gathered and preserved during his residence in those colonies; Mr. Fogarty, a collection of the war implements of New Zealand; Captain Stotherd, R. E. rocks and minerals: Mr. St. Pierre Foley, the like; and various valuable gifts from Mr. Furnell, Mr. J. Norris Russell, Mr. Walnutt, Mr. Spaight, Mr. Hinds, Mr. Glover, Major Bevan, Messrs. Myles, Brothers, and Mrs. Stackpoole, have been presented.

THE END.